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HAMLET

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF ITS
PERFORMANCE WITNESSED

BY

Jack Howison

AGED 12

PHILADELPHIA
1894

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Gips
Mr. E. Wiley
ap 17 '13

PREFACE

These pages were written by a little boy twelve years of age after attending a performance of Hamlet. His account is printed precisely as it fell from his pen, without the slightest change in orthography, punctuation, or arrangement. In other words, the impressions created by the representation of the divine tragedy upon his boyish mind are here translated into his own diction, the spring of his emotion bubbling to the surface in an unaffected and unsought course of nature.

Master Howison had never read or seen the play of Hamlet until the eventful evening he mentions. For some days after the performance he amused and interested those of us in his family by reciting various passages, and illustrating the manner of the actors he had seen. His mind seemed to be filled with the spirit of the play and his ear had caught the deathless music of Shakspeare's verse. It occurred to his friends that an account of the play as he had seen it, written by himself might be interesting ; hence these pages.

He recognizes completely the crudity of his performance, but has been persuaded to allow his words to be printed in order that his name may be connected, however unworthily, with that of the immortal master.

There is reason to believe that the interest in the study thus begun will continue. He has already provided himself with Shakspeare's works and is giving all the attention he may spare from his school duties to that delightful avocation.

The photographic portrait which appears as a frontispiece was taken, developed, and printed by Master Howison without assistance. It is copied from an engraving, a folio proof before letters, of the Chandos portrait.

The other night I went to see Hamlet at the Girard avenue theater. I think it was Oct 22 1893

The first scene was where two men were on guard and they heard some one coming and said stand and unfold your self it was Marcellows you come most careful on your hour said the guards. They were not there long before Marcellows said look look what comes speak to it one of the guard said speak speak I pray you speak I charge you speak no it will not speak said Marcellows it is offended so the ghost went away. It was the finest ghost I ever saw. Then Marcellows and the guards went right to Hamlet's house and told him all about what they had seen the night before. Hamlet said I will be there betwix eleven and twelve so the next night Hamlet was there when the clock struck twelve and then the ghost came in Hamlet said to it speak speak and the ghost turned around and made motions for Hamlet to come with it. Marcellows did not want Hamlet to go but he would and he followed it till it came to a certain spot where

it stoped and said I am thy father spirit who was killed by my own brother.

Doomed to walk the earth for a certain time but soft me thinks I smell the scent of the morning air I must away.

2 scene { Then Hamlet went back to the castle and was not there long before Ophilia's father came in and Hamlet said to him have you not a daughter and the old man said he is harping on my daughter again. Ophilia came in and her father would not let her stay long but made her go away with him Hamlet was in love with her but she thought he did not love her but in a little while Ophilia came in again and Hamlet was talking to her when her father came and took her away. The next act was where Hamlet and his mother were in the room together and Hamlet told her to pray over his father and after that he showed her the picture of his father which he carried on a chain around his neck and said this was your husband and pointed to the picture on the wall and said this is your husband now and Hamlet thought the king was coming in the door so he drew his sword out and stabbed Ophilia's father instead of the king

after that Ophilia went crazy and very soon after drowned herself. The next act was church and grave yard the old grave digger was digging a grave Hamlet and Marcellows came and asked whose grave this is the old fellow said it is my grave Hamlet said I mean who is going to be burried there A young lady said the old grave digger the old fellow dug a skull up out of the grave and Hamlet asked him whose it was the old fellow looked at it for a while and said it was David Garrick and Hamlet looked at it and showed it to Marcellows and then handed it back to the grave digger. The old fellow sings while he digs the grave in a little while the bell toles and the funeral comes in first six women carring the coffin and then her brother and the King and Queen and some others they open the lid of the coffin and look at her and close it again and the old grave digger lets the coffin down the hole the Queen throws a few flowers down in the grave Hamlet and Marcellows are hiding behind a tree and they see it all.

I forgot to put in where Hamlet stabbes Ophilia's father behind the bed curtains he thought it was the king. In a very little while the white light's go out and they show blue

light on the stage to represent night this made me nervous. While Hamlet and his mother are in the room the ghost comes in and Hamlet asks his mother wheather she sees it and she thinks he has gone crazy. I thought it was the best play I ever saw the ghost was a dandy and Creston Clarke played his part so very well and the scenery was very pretty.

And another thing I forgot to say that Ophilia comes in the room where the king and Queen is with her hair hanging drown her back and with some flowers in her hand and she gets down on the floor and spreads flowers all around in a circle and after that gets up and goes out.

Near the first act Hamlet and some others get up a play to scare the King. They play that a man was lying down a sleep in his garden and some one comes and pours some poisen liquid in his ear that kills him They do this to remind the King how he killed Hamlet's father and so he gets scared and runs out and every body wonders what is the matter with him The last act was a scene in the palace the King and Queen was sitting on the throne and a good many others are around the King had fixed it up with Ophilia's brother to be there to

fight a duel with Hamlet so he took two cups and put some good wine in one cup and some poison in the other cup so the time came for Hamlet and Ophelia's brother to fight the duel and so they began. Hamlet got the best of him the first time and the King said I drink to Hamlet but he did not mean it so they commense again and Hamlet wounded him and so the King handed Hamlet the poison cup to Hamlet but he would not take it and the Queen says I will drink to Hamlet and so she takes it and says Hamlet I am poisoned, and Hamlet runs right up to the King and stabbed him And so the play of Hamlet ended. I think it was the best play that Shaksphere or any body else ever wrote. The dresses were very pretty but looked queer to me though I suppose that was the way they looked in Shakspeare time. I think Shakspeare must have been a very great man and writer to have thought out such a great play.

I think it is just right I don't think any body could improve this play.

I hear that he has written a great many more good plays but I don't think any of them could be as fine as HAMLET I hope I will see some more of his plays sometime soon.

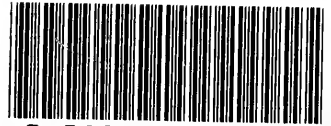
I expect I have not remembered all but this is as near as I can come to it.

I am glad I am getting payed for my first literary work although it is only a criticism on another fellow.





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